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IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend paragraph 2 on page 9 as follows:

Bridge 130 comprises portals 131 and 132, and bridge 140 comprises portals 141 and 142. Further, as shown in Fig. 1, each of the portals 131, 132, 141, and 142 includes corresponding storage areas 133, 134, 143, and 144, respectively. Node 150 exists on the first bus 100 as a TIMEOUT request message sender, and node 160 exists on the third bus 120 as a destination of a TIMEOUT request message-addressed node. A network configuration to which the invention applies should not be restricted only to this example.

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